ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE US MILITARY’S HUMAN TERRAIN SYSTEM

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Jennifer Carol Greanias, B.A.

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Jennifer C. Greanias, B.A.

Thesis Advisor: Professor Jennifer Sims, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

Briefed to the Defense Department in 2005, the Human Terrain System (HTS) was the Pentagon’s response to military commanders’ complaints that a dearth of cultural knowledge was hamstringing their ability to conduct effective counterinsurgency operations. Designed to provide deep cultural expertise to units deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, the Human Terrain System fielded its first Human Terrain Team (HTT) in 2007 to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division deployed to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Salerno, Afghanistan. This team impressed Brigade Commander, Colonel (COL) Martin Schweitzer who testified before the House Armed Services Committee that the team’s work helped reduce kinetic operations by 60-70%, expel a Taliban shadow government, and detain 32 foreign fighters. Instead of widespread adulations, HTS soon became the subject of intense scrutiny by the Network of Concerned Anthropologists (NCA), the American Anthropological Association (AAA), and others in the academic community who lambasted the program’s incompatibility with the AAA’s ethical guidelines. Programmatic flaws quickly surfaced as well, as former HTT members and a handful of investigative journalists exposed a program plagued by poor management and staffed by an unqualified and ill-prepared cadre of civilian social scientists. Yet, in contravention to widespread ethical and programmatic criticisms, the current HTS website optimistically presages the program’s expansion even in light of a congressionally-mandated FY11 funding freeze.
While the Human Terrain System may not be destined for retirement any time soon, its value as a vehicle for delivering deep cultural expertise to deployed military units remains in doubt due to the program’s failure to recruit and retain top talent, enforce quality control standards on HTT products, distinguish the HTT mission from intelligence collection, and adequately articulate a vision for life beyond Iraq and Afghanistan.
The research and writing of this thesis is dedicated to my thesis advisory group, especially Joseph Caddell; my thesis advisor, Professor Jennifer Sims; my husband, George Greanias; and Donna Greanias.

Many thanks,
Jennifer C. Greanias
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I. INTRODUCTION

The official Human Terrain System (HTS) website asserts that the HTS provides “a socio-cultural knowledge base in order to enable operational decision-making [and] enhance operational effectiveness.” While many military customers are quick to agree that HTS can do this and are thus of value in terms of contributing to a smarter counterinsurgency strategy, other critics question the utility of program citing the ethical issues associated with the military’s use of civilian social scientists and the many problems related to the program’s design. Congress has also weighed in, suspending the program’s FY 11 funds until it receives a much delayed assessment on the HTS program. Why does this apparent disparity of perceptions exist?

Professor Robert Albro, former chair of the American Anthropological Association’s (AAA) Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities (CEAUSSIC) and an anthropologist at American University concludes that proponents are not necessarily wrong to argue that Human Terrain Teams (HTTs) can and do contribute to a better understanding of foreign environments and thus enable more effective military operations, but he cautions against using any one team’s work as an exemplar for the

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1 The Human Terrain System comprises various components that include a CONUS-based research cell and special software to organize and catalogue data. HTS is best known for deploying teams of military personnel and civilian social scientists to work at the Brigade, Division, and Theater levels. These five- to nine-person teams are headed by a military team leader responsible for coordinating projects with military leadership, a social scientist who plans and designs research projects and performs qualitative and/or quantitative analysis of collected data, a research manager who identifies reporting requirements, disseminates products, and manages IT processes and infrastructure, and a human terrain analyst who provides the supported unit with an understanding of the population, develops and maintains connections with the local population in support of operationally directed research, and acts as the HTS liaison to the local population. For more information, visit the HTS website at http://hts.army.mil/htsDeployedTeamsHTA.aspx.


program’s utility writ large. “It isn’t that HTTs have not been effective; it’s that the program can’t guarantee that effectiveness.” In part, this deficiency is related to the program’s approach (i.e. embedding social scientists at the most tactical level of combat operations), which stands in contravention to basic ethical standards of conduct for social scientists particularly anthropologists.

On a more programmatic level, HTS is considered by many critics to be a half-hearted effort whose cash flow and positive press coverage hide a host of programmatic design flaws that include deficiencies related to the qualification of HTS personnel and the poorly managed training, hiring, and retention practices of HTS program managers; the variegated quality of output by individual HTTs; the ambiguity of the HTS mission as it relates to the military’s intelligence mission; and the program’s inability to articulate a vision beyond Iraq and Afghanistan.

To date, the literature related to the Human Terrain System generally falls into three camps: opponents of the program to include academic anthropologists such as Hugh Gusterson, David Price, and Roberto Gonzalez call for the program’s termination on account of its incompatibility with the AAA’s ethical guidelines. The second camp comprises, in large measure, a hodgepodge of journalists, applied social scientists, and military customers who celebrate the program as an inventive, albeit imperfect and hastily implemented, solution to understanding the cultural nuances of unfamiliar environments – a key requirement for military

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4 Robert Albro, telephonic interview with the author, 5 October 2010.
6 Hugh Gusterson is a professor of Cultural Studies at George Mason University. David Price is a professor of Anthropology and Sociology at St. Martin’s University. Robert Gonzalez is an associate professor of Anthropology at San Jose State University.
leaders conducting counterinsurgency operations. The third, least organized community of interest resides in the blogosphere and in other alternative, internet-based media (e.g. Open Anthropology, Zero Anthropology, Counterpunch, Wired’s Danger Room). These critics tend to argue against the program’s effectiveness, relying on the work of independent investigative journalists and anonymous sources to catalogue the systemic problems associated with the program’s administration.

In general, media reports, military accounts, and academics’ critiques of the program account for the majority of the published literature on the Human Terrain System with the preponderance of literature stemming from the years immediately following the program’s implementation (2007-early 2009). Significant gaps exist related to how the program is currently addressing criticisms that were levied against the program early on and subsequently dismissed as ‘growing pains’ by program administrators. This incomplete picture is likely due to a variety of factors to include the proprietary and on-going nature of the program, which make full disclosure problematic; the preponderance of well-published criticism emanating from the academic establishment whose claims may be overshadowing the more nuanced contours of the debate; and the nature of the media cycle. Thus, while this study assesses the effectiveness of the HTS program using publicly available information, it remains an initial effort whose aim is to showcase the ethical and programmatic flaws of the Human Terrain System that, I contend, call into question the program’s staying power and thus its long-term ability to contribute to more effective counterinsurgency operations.

II. Origins

1. The need for culture in counterinsurgency operations
Coalition forces led by the United States failed to restore civil order quickly enough after the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, and their leaders failed to understand how seriously subsequent coalition actions violated core Iraqi cultural values. Those combined failures turned what had been a swift victory with conventional arms into a protracted and difficult counterinsurgency, for which U.S. troops and doctrine were ill-prepared.  

Although a small school of strategists and planners within the Defense Department and the Intelligence Community had continued to study counterinsurgency and wargame asymmetric threats the likes of those encountered in Iraq, the mainstream military had largely rejected this paradigm after Vietnam. The military had instead chosen to focus on developing Cold War doctrine to counter the conventional Soviet threat, building an arsenal of advanced conventional weapons, and investing in technology the likes of precision-guided munitions, satellite technology, airborne delivery systems, and cutting-edge communications.

When implemented in Iraq, these tools proved to be ineffective, as military leaders, slow to recognize the insurgency they were facing, realized that the war they had planned for was not the war they were, in fact, fighting. Following the appointment of General David Petraeus as Commander, Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I), the military adopted a counterinsurgency strategy that emphasized outreach to and protection of the population, economic development, and the empowerment of local politicians and indigenous security forces. To wage an effective counterinsurgency campaign, the military would need to understand the population it was obligated to protect; however, military commanders were quick to recognize their cultural knowledge limitations.

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9 Ibid.
Initial operations in Afghanistan and Iraq revealed three interrelated shortcomings in military cultural competency. First, cultural training for troops, staffs, and commanders was utterly deficient. Second, military intelligence personnel were not prepared to read or analyze cultural terrain and lacked comprehensive data to constantly provide cultural analysis. Third, many staffs were incapable of using cultural terrain to their advantage, which resulted in an early series of wasted opportunities that fed the insurgencies and terrorist operations of the Taliban, Ba’athist insurgents, and Al-Qaeda.\(^{11}\)

The need for cultural knowledge had, in fact, been expressed at the onset of violence in Iraq in 2003 when Congressman Ike Skelton called for Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to address cultural shortcomings in the military’s strategy.\(^{12}\) A year later, in 2004, retired Major General Robert Scales wrote that “this new era requires soldiers equipped with exceptional cultural awareness and an intuitive sense of the nature and character of war”\(^{13}\) adding, in a 2004 testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, that

\[\text{...intimate knowledge of the enemy’s motivation, intent, will, tactical method and cultural environment has proven to be far more important for success than the deployment of smart bombs, unmanned aircraft and expansive bandwidth.}\] \(^{14}\)

Aware of this cultural knowledge deficit, the Defense Department undertook several initiatives to improve the military’s cultural acumen to include developing cultural training centers (the US Army Training and Doctrine Command Culture Center and the United States Marine Corps Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning), introducing cultural awareness classes at entry-level specialization schools and to units bound for Iraq and Afghanistan, and authoring a new field manual for the Army and Marine Corps\(^{15}\) that emphasized the importance of cultural knowledge in understanding the local population whose protection constituted the highest

\(^{15}\) Army Field Manual 3-24 (Counterinsurgency)
priority for all military commanders. Additionally, the Bush administration orchestrated an outreach campaign spearheaded by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates who, in speeches at universities and to academic organizations, emphasized the importance of civilian participation at all levels of this strategy’s implementation. Hugh Gusterson, avid critic of the HTS concept, wrote that “…deciding that anthropology might be to the ‘war on terror’ what physics was to the Cold War, the national security apparatus took a cultural turn.”

2. The Human Terrain System is born

In addition to the more permanent institutional fixes undertaken by the Defense Department to address the military’s dearth of cultural knowledge, in 2003, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) J3 Science Advisor working with civilian anthropologist, Dr. Montgomery McFate, initiated a proof-of-concept program known as the Cultural Preparation of the Environment (CPE). Designed initially as a database to capture socio-cultural information from military leaders returning from theaters of operation, the CPE database failed to impress military commanders during its initial field test. Among those selected to test the program was Colonel (COL) Steve Fondacaro who returned the software with a suggestion that, in lieu of a computer program, CPE administrators devise a program to embed cultural advisors with military units.

In 2005, Montgomery McFate and Andrea Jackson responded to this request in a Military Review article entitled “An Organizational Solution to DOD’s Cultural Knowledge Needs”

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19 Montgomery McFate, telephonic interview with the author, November 4, 2010.
20 Ibid.
where the authors suggested creating a cadre of social scientists to conduct on-the-ground ethnographic research and deliver cultural knowledge to deployed military units.\textsuperscript{21} Shortly after publication, the Department of Defense’s Joint Improvised Explosive Devise (IED) Defeat Task Force (what would eventually become the Joint IED Defeat Organization or JIEDDO) funded this program now known as the Human Terrain System.

\textbf{III. MILITARY PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROGRAM’S WORTH:}

For many military customers, the Human Terrain System, best exemplified by the program’s Human Terrain Teams, has contributed to the military’s enhanced understanding of the operational environment. This has, many claim, led to tactical and operational successes credited with helping the military realize its strategic goals in Iraq and Afghanistan. Although official statistics and objective assessments espousing such claims do not currently exist in the public domain, anecdotes abound that, when taken together, tell a very different story of the Human Terrain System than that presented by the program’s critics.

In one account from Iraq, Human Terrain Team analysts informed a ground commander that, contrary to his initial instinct to detain an individual found with what was believed to be jihadist literature and a riflescope, he should not arrest the man because the materials in his possession were, in fact, run-of-the-mill religious material and a bird gun. Based on this information, the commander released the suspect whose family, in return, provided information on the whereabouts of a large buried explosive device.\textsuperscript{22}

In another account from Afghanistan, Lieutenant Colonel (LtCol) Brian Christmas, Commander of 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines appreciated ‘the edge’ his HTT gave him in the form of a ‘cheat sheet’ passed to him prior to a meeting of tribal elders. This cheat sheet detailed the major concerns that LtCol Christmas would likely hear during the meeting and provided profiles on the major leaders’ backgrounds.23

For the 1st Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division deployed to Iraq, the Baghdad-born social scientist on the HTT led an effort to convene a meeting of local sheiks to discuss the possibility Anti-Coalition Forces’ reconciliation with the local government. Deemed untenable by the unit’s intelligence staff, this effort led to 10-12 mid-level militia members declaring, in a written statement, their intent to cease hostile activities. 24

Perhaps the most cited example of HTT success is COL Martin Schweitzer’s testimony in 2008 before the House Armed Services Committee. The first military commander to receive an HTT, COL Schweitzer, Commander of the 4th Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division in Afghanistan, asserted that his HTT assisted in developing more effective non-kinetic courses of action, improved the unit’s overall situational awareness, improved consequence management, increased host nation government support, improved the brigade’s humanitarian assistance efforts, improved the village assessments, improved information operations capabilities, decreased enemy forces attacks, and decreased ordinary crime in our area of operations. Without the HTT filter on courses of action and the alternative maneuver tools they identified to create the exact same effect, we would have lost...double the lives, both military and civilian. Using HTT capabilities, we reduced kinetic operations by 60 to 70 percent during our 15-month deployment.25

25 House Armed Services Committee, Terrorism and Unconventional Threats Sub-Committee and the Research and Education Sub-Committee of the Science and Technology Committee, Hearings on the Role of the Social and
In one specific example, COL Schweitzer recounted how in Ghazni Province, the Taliban had continued to attack government leaders and Afghan Security Forces despite the unit’s best attempts to engage village elders. Observing that the true community power brokers were not the village elders but the mullahs, the HTT recommended to COL Schweitzer that he investigate non-kinetic courses of action aimed at reaching out to them. According to COL Schweitzer,

*For five years, we got nothing from the community. After meeting with the mullahs, we had no more bullets for 28 days; captured 80 Afghan-born Taliban ... and 32 Foreign Fighters. As a result of this operation last June, Ghazni Province no longer harbors the “shadow Taliban government – it no longer exists.” What was the net effect? When we took over in early 2007, only 19 of 86 formal and informal districts supported the government. Today, we assess 72 of those same Districts support their government. I absolutely attribute some of that change to the HTT.*

Yet in spite of such glowing praise, the active FY11 funding stream for the HTS program has been suspended and, according to the FY11 National Defense Authorization Act, the House Armed Services Committee,

...is increasingly concerned that the Army has not paid sufficient attention to addressing certain concerns...The bill limits the obligation of funding for HTS until the Army submits a required assessment of the program, provides revalidation of all existing operations requirements, and certifies Department-level guidelines for the use of social scientists.

**IV. ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE US MILITARY’S HUMAN TERRAIN SYSTEM**

1. The ethical dilemma of HTS

*Behavioral Sciences in National Security, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., April 24, 2008. 4. In following up on these claims, David Price, an anthropologist at Saint Martin’s University in Lacey, Washington, filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to look at the report COL Schweitzer cited in his testimony. He discovered, through correspondence with COL Schweitzer, that there was no study to substantiate the statistics provided in the transcript. For more information on this, visit http://www.coun terpunch.org/price04072009.html (accessed November 7, 2010). 26 A mullah refers to an Islamic cleric or mosque leader. 27 Ibid, 4-5. 28 H.R. 5136, 25.*
In addition to Congress suspending the program’s FY11 funding, critics continue to call for the program’s cancellation. These demands may be linked to the work of the Network of Concerned Anthropologists (NCA) and the American Anthropological Association (AAA) that, in 2007, marshaled their resources in an organized, well-publicized campaign to end the military’s use of civilian social scientists on Human Terrain Teams.29 This clarion call and the high-profile manner in which the NCA and the AAA advertised their objections have helped to contribute to an exodus of social scientists from the HTS program, a departure that deprived the program of one-third of its employees and compromised the effectiveness and credibility of the HTS program.30

At issue is the AAA’s assertion that HTS violates their Code of Ethics and Principles of Responsibility31 in several key ways. First, HTT anthropologists are less likely to gain informed consent from the subjects with whom they are communicating due to the coercive conditions created by the combat zones in which they are operating. Second, HTT anthropologists’ inability to control the information they gather has the potential to lead to situations where human subjects are put at risk. Finally, their close relationship with the military not only overshadows


the independent nature of their work but also masks their civilian identity as HTT members wear military uniforms and travel with military escorts.  

*Informed Consent.* Many anthropologists concede that the caravan of military might that accompanies the HTT while on mission creates conditions that reduce the likelihood that HTTs will obtain objective, accurate data unfettered by civilians’ fears of reprisal. Major (MAJ) Robert Holbert, a training advisor and Area Studies coordinator at the Human Terrain System School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and a former HTT member himself, says that the fact that civilian members of HTTs carry weapons and travel with a military convoy does not automatically translate into coercion from the Afghan point of view:

*That might be the case in a different place but Afghans understand the security environment; they know who we are and they are experienced enough to know what to expect with us. I found that carrying a weapon, especially a knife, can be a real conversation starter. Usually that’s how you get males to talk to you - by allowing them to check out your gear.*

Anecdotally, these cultural gestures can be seen as benign exchanges between individuals sharing stories and engaging in cultural discourse. However, in light of the many other ways in which the military and the local population interact, it can be hard to predict how civilians will perceive military presence and actions. Because the US military and its Coalition partners are powerbrokers who can exert control through threat of force, Iraqis and Afghans may feel that few mechanisms exist to guarantee their right to resist appeals for information especially if those appeals are delivered by soldiers carrying weapons. As such, fear – whether real or perceived – acts as an underlying factor in all interactions and has the potential to minimize the chances for

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32 AAA’s Executive Board Statement.
33 MAJ Robert Holbert, telephonic interview with the author, September 29, 2010.
truly informed consent.\textsuperscript{34} One Marine Brigade Commander summarized the issue, stating “When you go out with a bunch of uniforms, this makes the survey something else. You begin to start to look like you are trying to influence a certain outcome. It looks more like push polling.”\textsuperscript{35} Thus, according to Robert Albro, what HTTs do (i.e. engage in rapid appraisal techniques) is very different than what anthropologists do (i.e. conduct ethnographic research and traditional fieldwork) - a key point for anthropologists who may want to join HTS to conduct research in Iraq and Afghanistan but who ultimately dismiss the program’s data collection methodology as a bastardization of their discipline’s research techniques.\textsuperscript{36}

\textit{Do No Harm.} Part of the controversy over pairing social scientists with the military is the issue of injury. Social scientists, by way of discipline-specific ethical codes, promise to do everything in their power to protect informants and local civilians. Often overlooked by academics removed from current combat environments is the fact that military commanders conducting counterinsurgency operations also seek to protect indigenous populations.\textsuperscript{37} According to counterinsurgency expert and Iraqi surge architect, David Kilcullen, “[f]ield evidence suggests that the more anthropological knowledge is available to counter-insurgents, the more humane their operations.”\textsuperscript{38} Professor of Anthropology Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban adds that “... Anthropologists have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan as part of the Human

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[34] Donna Winslow, “Anthropology and cultural awareness for the military,” Army Logistics University’s Culture Resources Center: 15, \url{http://www.almc.army.mil/ALU_CULTURE/docs/WinslowJune16.pdf} (accessed November 6, 2010).
\item[36] Robert Albro, telephonic interview with the author, October 5, 2010.
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Terrain Teams embedded with combat troops. Part of the work they do unquestionably causes harm to some people—but it may prevent harm to others.”

Herein lies the problem. While some Human Terrain Team members do indeed take steps to protect civilians to include removing identity data from their research, this is not always the case nor are there oversight mechanisms in place to enforce such standards of research. Because HTT research is not subject to any kind of external review process (required of anthropologists conducting fieldwork and those performing human subject research), few safeguards exist to enforce data quality standards and identity protection measures. According to Pauline Kusiak, currently a strategist with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and a one-time socio-cultural analyst with the Army’s 4th Psychological Operations Groups,

…despite the guiding principle to “do no harm,” no scholar can ever know for certain the uses to which his or her work will be put...To manage such risks, academic researchers have created Institutional Review Boards and human subject research committees on university campuses. The job of these committees is to review human subject research proposals and to provide oversight of research that involves human subjects...Nothing precludes the Department of Defense (DOD) from organizing and managing its own institutional review boards or from ensuring that research conducted for the DOD subscribes to common regulations of federally funded research.

Yet, to date, there is no evidence to suggest that such committees are in place or in the process of being convened to address these concerns, a shortcoming that is likely increasing the difficulty of recruiting qualified anthropologists for HTS who, as noted above, may view the program as

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40 AAA’s CEAUSSIC Final Report, 16.
41 Ibid.
something other than social science due to the fact that no oversight mechanisms are in place to ensure the protection of research subjects.

Another complicating factor that is affecting the program’s ability to recruit and keep top talent is the issue of military patronage. Because HTT members work at the pleasure of military commanders and respond to those commanders’ information needs, the information they gather and analyze is tied to an operational requirement communicated to them by the military chain of command.\(^\text{43}\) Because of this relationship, that information ‘belongs’ to the unit that requests it and, as such, is not the HTTs to safeguard or control.\(^\text{44}\) As it does with all information, the military incorporates HTT data into the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP)\(^\text{45}\) where HTTs’ inputs are made available to the entire military staff that uses them to plan a range of activities and operations.\(^\text{46}\) The fact that HTTs do not control the information they gather is a key point for critics who lament social scientists’ inability to guarantee the protection of sources and data in light of the fact that the ultimate owner and user of the information is not the person who collects it. Because of the distance between the collector (e.g. the HTT) and the customer (e.g. a military unit), few HTTs can say definitively that their work does not cause harm to Afghan and Iraqi civilians.

Transparency. The biggest problem with HTTs may reside in the threat they pose to the profession on which they depend. HTT members wear uniforms, have the option of carrying a

\(^{43}\) Winslow, “Anthropology and cultural awareness for the military,” 16-17.

\(^{44}\) MAJ Robert Holbert, telephonic interview with the author, September 29, 2010.

\(^{45}\) According to Army Field Manual 5-0 Information Brief, “the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP) is an iterative planning methodology that integrates the activities of the commander, staff, subordinate headquarters, and other partners to understand the situation and mission; develop and compare courses of action; decide on a course of action that best accomplishes the mission; and produce an operation plan or order for execution.” In layman’s terms, this is the military’s planning process that helps military commanders make decisions about what they need to do to realize operational objectives. This brief and FM 5-0 can be accessed at: http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/FM50/

\(^{46}\) LTC George Glaze, interview at the Pentagon with the author, October 1, 2010.
weapon, and travel with military patrols. According to the NCA and the AAA, these facts distort the anthropologist’s academic affiliation, hide his/her civilian identity, and, in doing so, prevent social scientists from acting openly and ethically. Even if HTT members declare their civilian affiliation, by wearing a uniform, they confuse the local populace that, at best, assumes the social scientist is a soldier, and, at worst, mistakes him/her for a spy. Such confusion may cause distrust, discourage full disclosure, and result in long-term implications for non-HTT social scientists who, rendered guilty by association, opt to keep their distance from the program for fear of facing accusations of espionage.

The lack of a peer review process is another challenge that hampers the program’s ability to advertise itself as social science and thus recruit qualified personnel. Considered a staple for many social science disciplines, the peer review process allows academics to socialize their research, enforce standards of ethical and academic integrity, and scrutinize research methodologies, assumptions, and conclusions. According to Kusiak,

The structure of knowledge production in the academic environment of a university is more like a distributed network: typically, no single center monopolizes authority, rather multiple communities compete with each other (as “schools of thought” on a subject, for example). The structure of knowledge production in the military, as well as in the intelligence community more broadly, is instead far more vertically organized and hierarchically oriented. Without some way to loop socio-cultural research back into academic channels, military planners risk putting too much faith in the untested assumptions of their socio-cultural researchers and of putting on a pedestal “academic expertise” that is no longer truly tested as such.

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48 Ibid.
According to Robert Albro, by removing this essential component from the process, “you can no longer call this social science. It’s something lesser than ethnography.”

The CEAUSSIC committee, which Albro chaired, summarized it this way:

> When ethnographic investigation is determined by military missions, not subject to external review, where data collection occurs in the context of war, integrated into the goals of counterinsurgency, and in a potentially coercive environment – all characteristic factors of the HTS concept and its application – it can no longer be considered a legitimate professional exercise of anthropology.

More peripheral to the core complaints of social scientists who decry the incompatibility of the Human Terrain System with the discipline’s ethical standards is the issue of the program’s suspected impact on future social science endeavors. Considered ‘collaborators’ or spies by their most ardent critics, civilian social scientists on Human Terrain Teams may face accusations of ‘poisoning the well’ for future academics whose work may suffer if research subjects suspect their complicity with the national security establishment.

Worse yet, according to Professor Albro, “HTS tends to overshadow the larger conversation about military-social science engagement. It cuts off the broader bridge-building efforts with the national security establishment and tends to attenuate constructive debate.”

This controversy not only eclipses other, more fruitful initiatives between the military and the social science community, but it taints the relationship between both parties making academic recruitment for military projects more problematic in the long term. In essence, academics, already stigmatized for working for

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49 Robert Albro, telephonic interview with the author, October 5, 2010.
50 AAA’s CEAUSSIC Final Report, 54.
51 Ibid.
52 Robert Albro, telephonic interview with the author, October 5, 2010.
the government, fear that they will face even greater credibility hurdles to overcome the biases of disapproving colleagues.\textsuperscript{53}

These ethical concerns reinforce the staunch opposition of academics to the HTS program, and, on a more pragmatic level, they may be contributing to a program incapable of hiring and maintaining talent and thus hard-pressed to justify its perpetuity. Sensitive to the criticisms of colleagues, academics may think twice about joining the HTS program if they feel that their reputation, academic credentials, and future professional prospects are at stake. Additionally, HTS data collection methodologies, the program’s lack of a peer review process, the inability of HTTs to guarantee the safety of research subjects, and the ambiguity of the HTT-military relationship prove problematic for a program attempting to characterize itself as a legitimate vehicle for social science research and a credible repository for cultural knowledge. Without solutions to address the shortcomings of the program’s current policies and practices, HTS may be contributing to its own downfall, as fewer qualified academics gravitate toward a program seen by many as an illegitimate application of social science.

2. Program design

Complaints of HTS program dissidents have been less of malpractice or malevolent intent than of administrative incompetence or program ineffectiveness; largely allegations of inept management of the HTS program itself and its failure to recruit fully qualified personnel.\textsuperscript{54}

George Lucas

On a programmatic level, HTS suffers from design flaws that complicate the program’s ability to recruit and keep top talent, enforce quality control standards on HTT products,

\textsuperscript{53} AAA’s CEAUSSIC Final Report, 8.
distinguish the HTT mission from intelligence collection, and adequately articulate a vision for life beyond Iraq and Afghanistan.

First flaw – uneven HTT qualifications. The issue of HTT qualifications is at the heart of criticisms that mar the program’s reputation. According to one analyst “of the 35 social scientists based in Iraq and Afghanistan [in 2008], only about half have PhDs, and only seven of those deployed are anthropologists.” While this data may have been a result of a program still in the throes of self-discovery, the most current statistics reveal a steady deficit of qualified personnel program-wide. In 2009, of the program’s 417 employees, 32% held MA degrees and only 11% were PhDs. Of those with advanced degrees, only 11 were anthropologists with the majority of HTS employees holding degrees in other fields of social science. For a program that touts the importance of having “experienced cultural advisors familiar with the area in which the commander will be operating,” these numbers show how a program that was sold as a vehicle for bottling and distributing the expertise of MA/PhD-qualified anthropologists and sociologists is failing to attract them.

Separate from the issue of unmet expectations about the ability of program managers to recruit personnel with appropriate academic pedigrees, the program suffers from an inability to find suitable recruits with backgrounds in Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2008, only a handful of the 19 HTT members operating in Iraq were Middle East experts and only three spoke Arabic with the majority of team members having backgrounds in other geographic and functional areas to

56 AAA’s CEAUSSIC Final Report, 60.
57 Ibid.
include Latin America, Native American culture, and the American Goth underground. 59
Expertise in Afghanistan culture and languages is even harder to find. According to Chris
Mason, former State Department specialist on Afghanistan and currently a senior fellow at the
Center for Advanced Defense Studies in Washington, "there are not enough Afghan experts in
the entire United States to staff more than one or two human terrain teams, which have been the
Achilles' heel of the program from the start."60

One time HTS program manager, Steve Fondacaro remarked that while specific cultural
and linguistic expertise is nice to have, understanding social science methodology and techniques
is more important.61 Thomas Johnson, an Afghan expert at the Naval Postgraduate School and a
one-time HTT member, disagrees, stating “If you don't have a good knowledge of the actual
country and language, all the methodology can go for naught.”62 According to Lieutenant
Colonel (LTC) George Glaze, commander of 1-18 Infantry Battalion (1-18 IN) deployed to
southern Baghdad during the 2006-2008 ‘surge’, having a civilian expert fluent in Arabic was
necessary.63

_The language component is essential. It helps us with security, interaction with the
public…it allows the HTTs to have better situational awareness which feeds into the
security process. Lisa (Verdon, HTT member for 1-18 IN) didn’t carry a weapon so
language was one way she could decrease her vulnerability._64

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60 Farah Stockman and Bryan Bender, “Afghan plan adds 4,000 US troops,” _The Boston Globe_, March 27, 2009,
7, 2010).
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
64 LTC George Glaze, personal interview with the author at the Pentagon, October 1, 2010.
64 Ibid.
Inextricably linked to the generally poor qualifications of HTS personnel is the program’s dismal record of employee recruitment. Initially drawn to the program on account of the $250,000 salary, many HTT members signed on having undergone little vetting and with little understanding of what that sizeable compensation entailed. In Iraq in 2008, the deployment of HTTs was at first delayed due to problems finding willing and qualified PhD-level anthropologists. When teams did arrive, their level and quality of support was questionable. Many were accused of arriving too late to make a difference, offering only basic services comparable to what experienced military members could already provide, being physically unfit or unwilling to go on military patrols, lacking the military know-how to effectively communicate with and relate to soldiers, and acting generally unknowledgeable about what to do and how to perform the duties that military customers were promised. As such, of the 17 teams assembled and deployed to Iraq during this time, most were either quarantined on Forward Operating Bases not to be brought on patrols outside the wire or were returned to Corps headquarters. According to MAJ Holbert,

*It was hard to bring people up to speed especially when the military needed this capability fast. Everyone needed to be trained on military skills, and in the beginning, that wasn’t emphasized in the hiring process so you had a lot of people come unprepared to do this job.*

This fact, in addition to the conversion of HTS personnel from contractor status to government service employees (and the subsequent 50% pay cut) and the 2007 release of the AAA’s

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66 Montgomery McFate, telephonic interview with the author, November 5, 2010.


68 AAA’s CEAUSSIC Final Report, 31.

69 ibid, 21; MAJ Robert Holbert, telephonic interview with the author, September 29, 2010.

70 MAJ Robert Holbert, telephonic interview with the author, September 29, 2010.
statement condemning the program, contributed to an exodus of social scientists thereby depriving HTS program managers of one-third of its employees in 2009.

In addition to recruitment deficiencies, the program’s training regiment has a reputation for being superficial, uneven, and irrelevant. According to one HTT veteran interviewed for the CEAUSSIC report, “The training curriculum was put together in an ad hoc fashion by a retired colonel with no social science background.” Additionally, the instructors responsible for teaching the social science methods and ethics classes had limited experience with Afghanistan, Iraq, and the military. Given the program’s problems with recruitment, it could be argued that a relevant, rigorous training program would be necessary to make up for the shortcomings stemming from a less qualified HTT candidate cadre. However, that did not seem to be the case in the beginning.

MAJ Holbert states that, as a result of this feedback, efforts are currently underway to improve the hiring, training, and retention of HTS members. This includes tweaking the pre-deployment training regiment by establishing a relationship with the University of Nebraska at Omaha’s Center for Afghanistan Studies to teach Afghan culture, history, and language and revising the curriculum to include hands-on exercises to hone data collection skills and more in-

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72 Peter, “Should Anthropologists Help the US Military in Iraq, Afghan Wars?.”
73 AAA’s CEAUSSIC Final Report, 20.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
76 MAJ Robert Holbert, telephonic interview with the author, September 29, 2010.
77 MAJ Kevin R. Golinghorst, “Mapping the Human Terrain in Afghanistan,” (Master’s Thesis, School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2010), 27.
depth military familiarization classes. Additionally, program managers are reworking the recruitment process to focus on hiring people with fewer high-end academic credentials more military experience. Program managers are also emphasizing the need for continuity and lessons learned within the program. Whereas before, HTT members deployed and returned home to few follow-on opportunities, the program is focusing on ways to harness HTT members’ skills and experiences by creating opportunities for them as instructors at the HTS pre-deployment school at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

As the above indicates, HTS is evolving. However, the program’s current direction seems to be moving away from its original charter that emphasized the need for career ethnographers trained in geographically-relevant fields to provide deep knowledge to deployed military customers. As evidenced by a basic search on BAE System’s job’s website using, as keywords, ‘human terrain’, social scientists are still being recruited; however, the majority of vacancy announcements are tailored to people with military experience, intelligence backgrounds, and analytic expertise. Professor Albro agrees that the program is more focused on finding people with eclectic backgrounds, military experience, and careers in the intelligence field as opposed to academics from the civilian sector. Architect of the program, Montgomery McFate states that this was the program’s desired demographic all along; however, BAE’s poor recruitment efforts

78 MAJ Robert Holbert, telephonic interview with the author, September 29, 2010.
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
81 http://www.baesystems.jobs/.
82 Robert Albro, telephonic interview with the author, October 5, 2010.
and the media’s focus on the involvement of PhD-qualified academics helped create the false image of a program that was steeped in academia.\textsuperscript{83}

If, as McFate implies, PhD-level academics are not necessary for the program’s success and if “4 years of appropriate experience that demonstrates that the applicant has acquired knowledge of one or more of the behavioral or social sciences equivalent to the field”\textsuperscript{84} is all that is needed to qualify as an HTT social scientist (according to the BAE Systems website), then this may lend credence to critics’ claims that requisite expertise can be cultivated from within the existing ranks of government and the military. After all, if the civilian social scientist is what makes a predominantly military-staffed HTT unique and if program managers are recruiting social scientists with military experience, what is the value in outsourcing the function of ethnographic research to the civilian sector and housing this mission outside of military/government channels?

Owing to the distance afforded by their civilian affiliation, HTT social scientists are free to offer independent, divergent perspectives because they are not subject to the same cultural pressures and institutional norms as those who fall within the military’s hierarchical chain of command. However, this point may be overstated in light of the many advantages afforded by HTT members who have military experience and who thus understand military planning, language, and culture, an asset to military commanders such as LTC Glaze who, when talking about his HTT social scientist in Iraq, lauded her familiarity with military protocol: “1-18 was an

\textsuperscript{83} Montgomery McFate, telephonic interview with the author, November 4, 2010.
\textsuperscript{84} This is the minimum requirement for a HTS Social Scientists according to the ‘Required Skills’ section of the job vacancy announcement for Human Terrain System Social Scientist. This post can be found at http://www.baesystems.jobs/job_detail.asp?JobID=1785340 (accessed November 7, 2010).
Infantry battalion so we had all men; Lisa wasn’t needy; she knew how to interact with the battalion and how to take care of herself. Her military skills were a big advantage to us.”

The second flaw – variable quality of output. Attempting to be whatever the military leader needs them to be, HTTs provide highly variable services that differ in quality and type from one unit to the next due to a variety of factors to include team dynamics, the relationship between HTT members and the military, the priorities of the parent unit, and each team members’ ability and willingness to function in different types of security environments. The type of support varies widely with some teams writing reports based on unclassified sources to include the open media and academic journals, some HTTs acting as advisors or translators during meetings, others intimately involved in more traditional military work to include crafting military operations and non-kinetic courses of actions, and still others interviewing locals and conducting ethnographic research. The diversity of outputs is less controversial than the variation in the quality of production with one former team member adding, “I have been here for several months and we have not produced a single product that a few hard working NCOs could not have come up with on their own.” Montgomery McFate chalks this up to the poor training in the initial stages of the program’s lifecycle, stating that “we had no staff, no facilities, no support…we had no idea what the teams would be doing because this had never been done before.”

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85 LTC George Glaze, personal interview with the author at the Pentagon, October 1, 2010.
86 AAA’s CEAUSSIC Final Report, 21.
88 Non-Commissioned Officer.
89 Montgomery McFate, telephonic interview with the author, November 4, 2010.
The fact that teams act in such a wide variety of roles speaks to the program’s nebulous identity. According to the CEAUSSIC Final Report,

_These continued questions about what the program in fact is, and does, are made possible by the social and institutional contexts within DoD in particular in which the program emerged...The various descriptions of HTS as fulfilling either a research or tactical support purpose continue to coexist without desirable clarity. These are described differently by different HTS managers and employees, and serve to highlight a problematic ambiguity in the uses of social scientists and techniques of social science to support the function and activities of the program This confusion on the part of DoD organizations makes it possible for HTS to tack back and forth among these identities.₉₀_

This concerns critics who worry that too much fluidity and freedom create a slippery slope where HTTs feel more inclined to perform functions outside their mandate to include data collection and analysis that looks uncomfortably similar to the work of the unit’s intelligence staff.

_The third flaw - intelligence by another name._ The issue of intelligence in the HTS debate is particularly sensitive due, in part, to the legacy of the social science community’s historic relationship with the military especially during the Vietnam War. Between 1965 and 1970, debates raged over the propriety of the military-social science ‘collaboration’ following the sensational disclosures of Project Agile and Project Camelot. Seen as initiatives “to keep regimes in power that were favorable to the United States,”₉¹ Project Agile studied the Communist insurgency in Thailand while Project Camelot sought to determine the root causes of internal social rebellion in an effort to devise government solutions for said rebellion’s suppression.₉² Following the programs’ disclosures, the AAA in 1970 hosted a series of debates that served to reinforce the anthropological community’s opposition to the military’s conscription of social

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₉₀ AAA’s CEAUSSIC Final Report, 40-41.
₉¹ Matthew B. Stannard, “Montgomery McFate’s Mission: Can one anthropologist possibly steer the course in Iraq?,” _San Francisco Chronicle_, April 2007, 4.
science. As a result of this controversy and other current events (namely the growing unpopularity of the Vietnam War), anthropology, as a discipline, retreated from the national security establishment in an effort to protect and maintain the discipline’s ethical imperative.

On account of this history, social scientists remain acutely sensitive to comparisons that draw parallels between their work and that of intelligence professionals. To address this concern, Human Terrain System program managers have gone to great lengths to disassociate HTT information gathering efforts from intelligence collection efforts that focus on answering military commanders’ intelligence requirements. While some critics state that this is a semantically-driven ploy to sell the program to academics, in fact, HTT members are legally prohibited from collecting intelligence or answering questions from the unit’s intelligence section. However, the nuance of the argument is less about team members’ deliberate attempts to collect intelligence and more about the teams’ inability to prevent military planners and others from incorporating their information into the intelligence cycle and thus using their data to develop potentially lethal courses of action.

Critics argue that, because HTTs do not own the information they gather and thus cannot safeguard it or limit access, that information is openly available to intelligence staffs, military planners, and others outside the military chain of command to include intelligence agencies based in the US. Without dissemination controls and handling instructions, there is nothing that

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precludes these organizations from using HTT information, as applicable, in intelligence assessments, reports, and products.  

At first blush, it seems hard to imagine a scenario where an HTT report would be relevant to operational planners and intelligence staffs developing kinetic courses of action. A cursory glance over several HTS studies reveals, to those familiar with tactical intelligence products, the ‘unactionable’ nature of HTT data and thus the seemingly uncontroversial outcomes that might come of this data’s use. As a frame of reference, tactical intelligence units aim to collect information that, when analyzed and assembled for action, becomes intelligence intended to support military operations to include missions undertaken to detain enemy personnel. HTT information, in contrast, largely concerns itself with ‘survey data.’ Examples include studies of the marshes of southern Iraq, Afghan market and tribal analysis, Pashtun sexual and marriage norms in southern Afghanistan, the use of wasṭa in Iraq, provincial/district/village crop data, and studies on the origins of provincial protests, among others. While this list of topics is not all-inclusive, it does demonstrate the type of research conducted by HTTs, which is different than military intelligence work that, in many cases, focuses on threat-based outputs. However, as demonstrated in a previous section, HTT products come in various shapes, sizes, and forms. Because of this and the fact that these products are not subject to oversight and are disseminated at the discretion of the military (not the HTT), there exists the possibility that HTT data could be

95 Caryl, “Human Terrain Teams.”
96 According to article “‘Human Terrain’ Explains Corruption to the Army,” wasṭa is the use of connections to provide services for family and friends. See: http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2009/03/human-terrain-1 (accessed on November 11, 2010).
used inadvertently or otherwise to inform operations that lead to the detention, injury, or death of civilians.\(^98\)

This issue underwrites the ethical concerns described above and highlights the inability of HTS program managers to guarantee that HTT information will not be used in intelligence-driven operations. In one account, trainers at the HTS pre-deployment school in Fort Leavenworth estimated that 30\% of all HTTs become involved in supporting the intelligence needs of the Brigade.\(^99\) To many military members, this is a less-than-sensational fact, as every piece of information, whether it is gathered by dedicated intelligence collectors, line units, or non-lethal enablers\(^100\) supports the Brigade’s intelligence requirements, which are inextricably linked to the unit’s mission and the military commander’s intent. According to then LTC Gian Gentile who commanded an armored reconnaissance squadron in Iraq “these Human Terrain Teams, whether they want to acknowledge it or not […] do at some point contribute to the collective knowledge of a commander which allows him to target and kill the enemy.”\(^101\) LTC Gentile’s point is that the innate organizational and functional structure of all military units precludes separation, as all staff element inputs, enabler actions, and subordinate unit missions are, by design, converge to support one purpose: to accomplish the unit’s mission.\(^102\) It is difficult to conceptually and physically distance HTT efforts from those of intelligence staffs, a

\(^98\) AAA’s CEAUSSIC Final Report, 53-54.
\(^100\) Common enablers include Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), Civilian Affairs (CA) Teams, and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) element, among others.
\(^102\) LTC George Glaze, personal interview with the author at the Pentagon, October 1, 2010.
proximity that proves disconcerting to those who seek more guarantees that Human Terrain Teams are not collecting intelligence under the guise of ethnographic research.

The fourth flaw – the program’s inability to adequately articulate a vision beyond Iraq and Afghanistan. According to the official HTS website, Central Command (CENTCOM) has requested, in total, 42 HTTs for FY11 with 39 teams already in theater as of 1 October 2010.\textsuperscript{103} Additionally, although absent an active funding stream, the Undersecretary for Defense-Intelligence (USD-I) is looking to expand the program to European Command (EUCOM), Pacific Command (PACOM), and Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) with an emphasis on embedding teams prior to conflict outbreak or, in military terms, during Phase Zero or ‘shaping’ operations where efforts are undertaken to address the precursor causes of instability that lead to conflict.\textsuperscript{104} This is an unspoken acknowledgement that as the US presence in Iraq and Afghanistan tapers off and eventually ends, the program will live on.

One fact cannot be overstated in light of this release: embedding HTTs with Combatant Commands (COCOM) engaged in Phase Zero operations dramatically changes the HTS charter and may lead to a complete rebranding of the program. If this is indeed the future of the program, there are many questions and considerations that must be addressed before its implementation. Most importantly, while this may work for a certain type of COCOM (e.g. African Command) that exists in the realm of Phase Zero operations, what of support to other Combatant Commands such as CENTCOM and Special Operations Command (SOCOM) whose charters call for the ability to do a range of operations that includes stability and support, counterterrorism, and

\textsuperscript{103} HTS Developmental History, \url{http://humanterrainsystem.army.mil/htsAboutHistory.aspx} (accessed November 11, 2010)

counterinsurgency? If the program plans to provide support to all COCOMs, how are military planners to anticipate, prepare, and allocate resources toward the full range of scenarios that envision military-led responses to a variety of situations?

Separate from the military’s planning challenge, forming teams equipped with the expertise to provide cultural information on entire continents of countries will inflate costs at a time when defense budgets are under heavy scrutiny. Additionally, by charting a new course without addressing the problems of the past, HTS is at risk of repeating the many mistakes associated with its original fielding when the urgency of quickly assembling HTTs for Iraq in 2008 resulted in teams of uneven quality.

There are some potential upsides. Although embedding HTTs in Phase Zero operations does little to address social scientists’ concerns about the effects of military patronage on the discipline, such steps would go far to define the limits of the social science-military relationship, a key criticism of many skeptical academics. Additionally, it would help assuage the ethical concerns of social scientists who decry their inability to guarantee the safety of research subjects in combat zones that, by their very nature, imply some degree of danger to those caught in the middle. By collecting data during Phase Zero operations where bullets are not flying, social scientists may feel that there is more ethical insurance built into their contract with military customers, a fact that could lessen the likelihood of violating the ‘do no harm’ tenet of their professional oath.

However the program reinvents itself, there remains the fundamental issue of mission and purpose. According to Professor Albro, “one of the main areas of concern is that the program cannot identify exactly what it is trying to do. Is it advising? Is it field work? Is it data
collection? No one knows.” If HTS wants to be all things to all customers, how will a one-size fits all program address the requirements of a diverse set of military customers (e.g. AFRICOM, CENTCOM, PACOM, SOUTHCOM)? These concerns call into question the program’s long-term viability, as it is not clear how HTS plans to address the full spectrum of diverse customer requirements while remaining within its budget and staying true to its original charter of providing tailored social science support to military leaders in need of deep geographic and cultural knowledge.

V: IMPLICATIONS

As this study demonstrates, the current incarnation of the Human Terrain System is in disarray due primarily to the ethical dilemmas and design flaws associated with its early implementation that have not been addressed in a systematic, holistic fashion. Many of the ethical criticisms levied against HTS translate into real-world consequences to include a less qualified cadre of civilian social scientists. These criticisms taken in concert with the more pragmatic design flaws of the Human Terrain System underwrite a program whose long-term staying power and utility as a mechanism for enabling more effective counterinsurgency operations remain in doubt.

Advocates dismiss these problems as ‘growing pains’ while current administrators point to the steps taken to address early criticisms. However, given the consistently poor statistics related to HTT qualifications and program recruitment, the variegated quality of HTT outputs, the program’s inability to clearly distinguish HTT work from intelligence collection, and a questionable vision for the program’s life beyond Iraq and Afghanistan, the program should be

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105 Robert Albro, telephonic interview with the author, October 5, 2010.
on a path of retirement. Yet all the social scientists, military leaders, and scholarly articles consulted for this study indicate that this program is not going away any time soon.

By prolonging the lifecycle of a failing program, HTS may be obstructing the development of a sustainable, more permanent solution for the military’s cultural knowledge needs. Critics recognized this shortcoming early on, accusing HTS program managers of eschewing existing programs specifically designed to act as a culture stopgap for the military:

First, the proponents of human terrain failed to study projects and programs within the Department of Defense that were designed to address culture or related issues for deploying personnel. They appear to have bypassed assets and programs within Special Forces, Defense Language Institute, Defense Intelligence Agency, Civil Affairs, the Training and Doctrinal Command Culture Center, Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, The Foreign Area Officer Program, the Environmental Cultural Resources Program, and Psychological Operations. Instead of bringing their ideas and assets into the Department of Defense to support and integrate with these entities, they created a brand new program of their own, achieved extremely high levels of funding, and blindsided existing and nascent efforts to address the challenges that they claim to care deeply about.

As one Marine Lieutenant Colonel noted, “You need to build up the organic capacity of a military unit for it to succeed in its mission. To do this, you don’t need another collector.”

Because they come with field experience, five to eight years of university training, and an independent perspective that is hard to cultivate in vertical military chains of command, civilian experts are deemed essential to the HTTs mission. However, history and this study show that civilian experts’ participation in this program has been consistently uneven, a fact that calls into

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106 AAA’s CEAUSSIC Final Report, 44.
107 AAA’s CEAUSSIC Final Report, 44-45.
108 Ibid.
question the utility of a program originally predicated on civilian involvement but currently characterized by its paucity of MA and PhD-level personnel.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the absence of a dedicated vehicle to deliver cultural expertise, how can military leaders be assured that the vital mission of the Human Terrain System - to provide cultural knowledge to deployed military customers – persists? Military units already possess a wealth of experience to draw on from their many deployments since 2001. While this experience may not infuse the military with the cultural content of future, unspecified battlefields, it does offer lessons in how to conduct counterinsurgency operations and how to leverage cultural knowledge to the advantage of military endstates.

Existing literature contains a wide variety of possible solutions to include detailing civilian personnel with socio-cultural expertise from the Intelligence Community to assume one to two-year rotational positions at the COCOM or below level\textsuperscript{110}; increasing the ranks of the Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program and assigning those soldiers at the operational and tactical levels of command\textsuperscript{111}; offering the military’s Advanced Civil Schooling (ACS)\textsuperscript{112} program to a greater number of junior leaders and encouraging their pursuit of social science degrees; and expanding the curriculum and mandating robust participation at military cultural training centers.

By implementing these recommendations at the expense of the Human Terrain System, the Defense Department would be creating a permanent, more sustainable solution to the

\textsuperscript{110} Kusiak, "Sociocultural Expertise and the Military: Beyond the Controversy," 75.
\textsuperscript{111} Connable, "All Our Eggs in a Broken Basket: How the Human Terrain System is Undermining Sustainable Military Cultural Competence," 60.
\textsuperscript{112} Advanced Civil Schooling (ACS) is where the military sends officers to graduate school in exchange for their commitment to longer military careers.
problem of the military’s deficit of cultural knowledge. In addition to these options, the military could create a new Functional Area for socio-cultural research whereby field-grade officer earn graduate degrees in social science and are subsequently detailed to Combatant Commands for extended rotations. Additionally, the military could authorize the creation of a new Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) for Military Intelligence soldiers and officers that blends ethnographic research with human terrain analysis. Alternatively, the Military Intelligence Corps could expand its Basic and Advanced Course curriculum for All-Source Military Intelligence analysts to include seminars and field exercises focused on teaching and applying social science research methods. Another option would be to incorporate all HTT functions into a military unit’s existing intelligence architecture, using Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) provided by the Army Foundry Intelligence Training Program to train the deploying intelligence staff in basic social science research. These intelligence staffs would then be paired with the Human Terrain System’s US-based Reachback Research Cell (RRC) thereby connecting novice researchers with experienced social scientists and civilian cultural analysts to act as additional sources of information, academic advisors, and peer reviewers.

113 A Functional Area is specialized branch that a military officer selects after he/she completes his/her Captain-level basic branch professional development assignments. A Functional Area allows the military to maintain a cadre of highly trained officers for missions that require expertise in a specialized field of work. Some functional areas require the officer to attend 12-24 months of training or pursue a graduate-level education.
114 A Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) is the career path that a soldier selects once he/she finishes with basic training. These career paths are wide-ranging and entail advanced schooling where the soldiers learn how to perform the duties of his/her MOS.
115 Mobile Training Teams (MTT) are small teams comprising mobile trainers that travel to military garrisons to provide soldiers with focused intelligence training to meet their commander’s training and readiness requirements. MTTs provide specialized training modules and are heavily used by military units preparing for deployment. For more information, visit Army Foundry Intelligence Training Program at http://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/pdf/r350_32.pdf (accessed November 12, 2010).
116 For more information on the Reachback Research Cell, visit http://humanterrainsystem.army.mil/htsComponentsCONUS.aspx
No single one of these is a complete solution unto itself, and each can be war-gamed to the point of refutability. However, at the heart of each suggestion is the assumption that the military can do much of this work itself thereby eliminating some of the controversy surrounding the current program’s use of civilian experts. Granted, the quality of service may suffer; however, a 75% solution handled in-house may be better than a program that regularly promises wine and consistently delivers water.
Appendix 1: List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAA</td>
<td>American Anthropological Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACS</td>
<td>Advanced Civil Schooling</td>
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<td>CA</td>
<td>Civilian Affairs</td>
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<td>CEAUSSIC</td>
<td>Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities</td>
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<td>CENTCOM</td>
<td>Central Command</td>
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<td>COCOM</td>
<td>Combatant Command</td>
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<td>COL</td>
<td>Colonel</td>
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<td>CPE</td>
<td>Cultural Preparation of the Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOD</td>
<td>Department of Defense also known as the Defense Department</td>
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<td>EUCOM</td>
<td>European Command</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
<td>Foreign Area Officer</td>
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<td>FM</td>
<td>Field Manual</td>
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<td>FY</td>
<td>Fiscal Year</td>
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<td>HTS</td>
<td>Human Terrain System</td>
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<td>HTT</td>
<td>Human Terrain Teams</td>
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<td>IED</td>
<td>Improvised Explosive Device</td>
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<td>JCS</td>
<td>Joint Chiefs of Staff</td>
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<td>JIEDDO</td>
<td>Joint IED Defeat Organization</td>
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<td>LtCol or LTC</td>
<td>Lieutenant Colonel</td>
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<td>MAJ</td>
<td>Major</td>
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<td>MDMP</td>
<td>Military Decision-making Process</td>
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<td>MNF-I</td>
<td>Multi-National Forces-Iraq</td>
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<td>MOS</td>
<td>Military Occupation Specialty</td>
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<td>NCA</td>
<td>Network of Concerned Anthropologists</td>
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<td>PACOM</td>
<td>Pacific Command</td>
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<td>PRT</td>
<td>Provincial Reconstruction Team</td>
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<td>PSYOP</td>
<td>Psychological Operations</td>
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<td>RRC</td>
<td>Reachback Research Cell</td>
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<td>SOCOM</td>
<td>Special Operations Command</td>
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<td>SOUTHCOM</td>
<td>Southern Command</td>
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<td>USD-I</td>
<td>Undersecretary for Defense-Intelligence</td>
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